

Low-Income Energy Advisory Board Meeting  
Wednesday, April 3, 2013  
HRA/Human Resources Agency  
180 Clinton Street, New Britain, CT 06053

**Members/Designees:** Rhonda Evans, Taren O'Connor, Laura Gonzalez, Veronica Gomez, Robert Norton, Eddie Swift, Caty McDermott, Frank Augeri, Michael Coyle, Shirley Bergert, Jim McNally, and Kate Quigley.

**Others:** Joanne Balaschak, Chuck Anderson, Tom O'Brien, Dino Pascua, Gail Lucchina, John Erlingheuser (telephonic).

**Agenda/Item/Action**

**Welcome:** The meeting was convened at 1:32 p.m. by Mike Coyle.

**Approve Minutes of the March 6, 2013 meeting:** The Chair and Vice-Chair previously alerted the Board to scheduling conflicts that precluded their attendance at the April 3rd meeting. Mike Coyle acted on their behalf and welcomed everyone, after which a motion - duly seconded - for acceptance of the March 6th minutes was put before the Board. The vote thereon was unanimous.

**Administrative Matters:** Mike Coyle reviewed several LIEAB-related documents that had been distributed subsequent to the March 2013 meeting, to ensure all had received the documents in a timely way and had the opportunity to review them. They included a March 8th e-mail from DSS's Tom O'Brien following up on a data analysis issue from the March 6th meeting; a March 11th email from DEEP regarding LIEAB's position paper on pending legislation (standard offer); a March 20th email from DEEP that included agenda, draft minutes, and other documents; and a March 28th email from UI's Laura Gonzalez that included draft letters prepared by the LIEAB MPP working group.

**2013 LIHEAP Update:** Tom O'Brien provided an update, accompanied by handout materials. The first handout described in snapshot format the status of CEAP and CHAP by funding source, expenditures, and estimated balance(s) through April 1, 2013. The document also depicted in approvals, actual expenditure and estimated expenditure format the components of the programs at a subcategory level (e.g., CEAP/CHAP deliverable, CEAP/CHAP utility, Rental, Crisis, etc.). The second handout offered a caseload comparison by CAP, reflecting year-to-year change 2011 to 2013 (present), and a third handout compared CAP caseload by CAP, by fuel type, 2012 v. 2013.

Tom noted that LIHEAP funding amounts remained uncertain at the Federal level owing to continuing resolutions and the lack of a funding bill. It appears that the anticipated 5% cut would likely come to pass, but Tom reinforced the position that there continues to be sufficient funding to meet PY12-13 obligations.

With regard to caseload data, Tom expects that PY12-13 caseloads will likely remain less than forecast. Tom reported that his informal discussions with counterparts in New England states indicate that - with the exception of Vermont - they were experiencing diminished demand as well. In the absence of eligibility threshold changes, and with an ongoing difficult economic climate, Tom and his peers mutually found the caseload changes puzzling. Oil caseload - in particular - continues to decline.

Tom confirmed that DSS did issue press releases subsequent to the March 6th LIEAB meeting, affirming the program's ongoing ability to meet need in Connecticut and encouraging those eligible to apply for benefits.

As an aside, Tom reported that he was aware of a Bill under consideration that would require a study involving Energy Assistance, DSS, DEEP, and DECD. Frank Augeri confirmed that the Bill was #1083, and was continuing to advance through advanced through legislative process. (note that as of April 4th, the bill would require the DSS commissioner, in consultation with the commissioners of DEEP and DECD, to conduct a study of energy assistance programs administered by DSS. The study is to include, but not be limited to, a report on how responsive energy assistance programs are to recipients; what problems, if any, exist within such programs; whether program staff is sufficiently allocated; whether facilities housing program participants are equipped with adequate power sources in the event of a power outage; and recommendations for improvement. Lastly, the DSS commissioner is to report the study results and DSS's recommendations thereon to the General Assembly's joint standing committees of cognizance (human services, housing, energy, environmental protection, and economic and community development), no later than July 1, 2014.

Looking ahead to PY13-14, Tom observed that budgetary uncertainties at the federal level appear to preclude planning for the next program year.

**Utility Matching Payment Program Updates:** UI's Laura Gonzalez provided an update, noting 3,079 enrollees through March 20th (including 723 added in March); 538 below budget customers.

For the NU companies, Eddie Swift reported 16,083 CL&P enrollees through March 13th (including 4223 added in March); 3730 below budget customers, and 16,635 Yankee Gas enrollees through March 13th (including 4551 added in March); 2018 below budget customers.

For CNG and SCG, Jim McNally noted 19,063 CNG enrollees through March 31st, 2657 new enrollees in March. For SCG: 19,792 total enrollees, 3,044 of which were added in March. Jim added that below budget accounts were still being calculated as CNG and SCG continued to refine SAP outputs.

**Operation Fuel Update:** No report.

**Other Issues:**

**LIHEAP/CEAP PY13-14 Working Group:** no update

**MPP Letter Working Group:** Laura Gonzalez reported that a cross-section of stakeholders met at UI's Orange HQ to collaborate on letter "language" for three customer letters (drafts distributed to the Board for review and comment March 28th). The working group included Frank Augeri (PURA), Joanne Balaschak (New Opportunities, Inc.), Carmen Ramos (ABCD), Camille Perez (ABCD), Amos Smith (CAANH), Eddie Swift (NU), Teresa Jackman (NU), Michelle Lawson (SCG/CNG), Kathleen Wasilnak (UI), Laura Gonzalez (UI) and Joy Hollister (CLASS).

Laura walked the Board through the drafts, and solicited comment and suggestions thereon. Following brief discussion, Laura added that the next step would be formal submittal of the letter packet to DEEP's Public Utilities Regulatory Authority. Laura suggested that Board members reflect on, and share, the

drafts with interested persons and submit any further comment to Laura via email (laura.gonzalez@uinet.com) no later than May 31st.

Low Income Discount Rate draft: DEEP's Gail Lucchina reported that the long anticipated Low Income Discount Rate report is expected to be distributed within one week. Gail and Mike Coyle highlighted the process PURA is expected to follow, noting ample opportunity for further public participation and comment. Frank Augeri also commented on the case's (PURA Docket No. 12-07-01) administrative logistics and offered that individuals could reach out to PURA's Executive Secretary if any wished to be included on the service list for the proceeding.

LIEAB legislative proposal update: CAFCA's Rhonda Evans commented that the LIEAB "board composition" legislative proposal was not likely to further advance this session.

Weatherization Assistance Program update: Mike Coyle summarized recent events in DEEP's administration of the DOE-funded Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP). Mike reported that no DOE funding opportunity announcement had yet been issued for PY13-14 (beginning April 1st), and that DOE only last week (March 28th) granted DEEP's request for an extension of PY12-13, thus averting a program shutdown. Federal budget wrangling is anticipated to further delay PY13-14 announcements.

The meeting officially adjourned at 2:30 p.m. The next Board meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 1, 2013, at HRA in New Britain.